

We claim:

1. A reproduction apparatus providing reproduction protection, for operating on main data which are conveyed by a data medium, the apparatus comprising:

means for detecting medium protection data which are specific to said data medium and are also conveyed by said data medium;

means for generating apparatus protection data which comprise at least first apparatus protection data and second apparatus protection data,

wherein said first apparatus protection data are specific to a region or a country in which said reproduction apparatus is to be used, and can not be modified by a user of said reproduction apparatus and wherein said second apparatus protection data can be modified by the user to selectively define a plurality of protection levels including at least two levels which are respectively specific to adults and to children;

means for defining a protection level based on said medium protection data and said apparatus protection data in combination; and

means for executing reproduction of said main data in accordance with said protection level,

wherein, in response to a combination of said medium protection data with said first apparatus protection data, said reproduction apparatus reproduces said main data either in their entirety or not at all, and in response to a combination of said medium protection data and said second apparatus protection data, said reproduction apparatus reproduces said main data in their entirety, partially, or not at all,

wherein, for each combination of protection levels based on said medium protection data and said apparatus protection data, there is a corresponding range of one or more possible values of final protection level, said corresponding range extending from a least severe value to a most severe value,

wherein said data medium conveys both said medium protection data and said main data in an identical form.

2. A reproduction apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said means for executing operates in response to said combination of said medium protection data with said first apparatus protection data to cause said reproduction apparatus to reproduce said main data either in their entirety or not at all,

said means for executing operating in response to said combination of said medium protection data and said second apparatus protection data to cause said reproduction apparatus to reproduce said main data in their entirety, partially, or not at all.

3. A reproduction apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said means for executing further operates in response to a value of final protection level between the least severe value and the most severe value in accordance with said combination of protection levels.

4. A reproduction apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said means for executing reproduction of said main data further comprises means for executing decoding of said main data in accordance with a value of final protection level between the least severe value and the most severe value in accordance with said combination of protection levels.